

ONE hundred years ago,
on July 16, Asheville experienced the worst flood in its history.

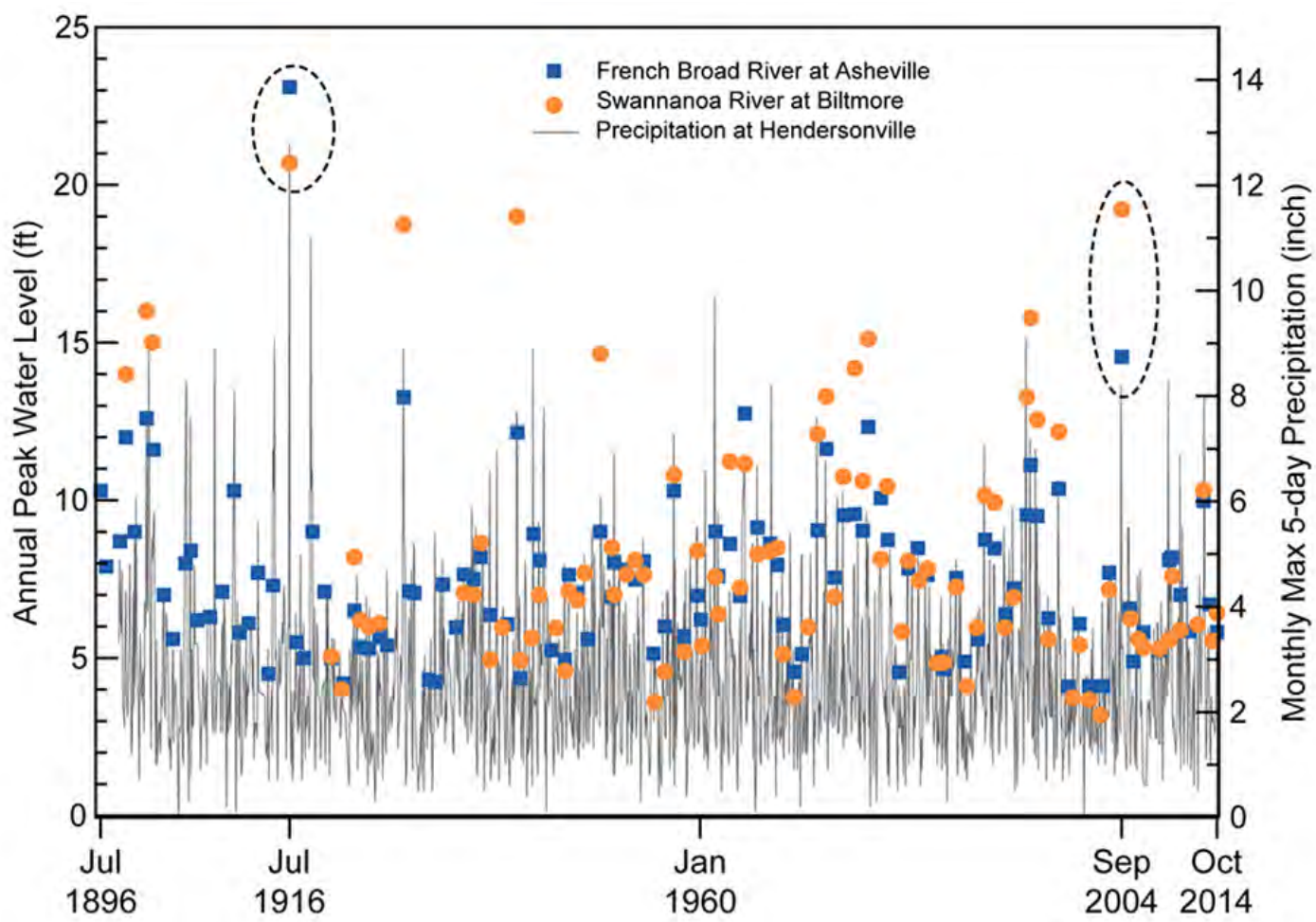
This catastrophic event reminds us of society’s vulnerability to natural hazards and of the interconnectedness of our towns with the surrounding environment. We cannot stop extreme weather events, but we can make our communities more resilient to these events.

THE
GREAT FLOOD 1916

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA: A METEOROLOGICAL TIMELINE

- Several dozen lives lost
- \$21 million in damages (\$500 million in today's dollars)
- Railroad tracks damaged or destroyed
- Dams destroyed, cutting off all hydroelectric power
- Severe flooding in Biltmore Village and on the Biltmore Estate
- Warehouses, industrial plants, and homes along the French Broad flooded
- Riverside Park washed away

French Broad River			Swannanoa River		
	Annual Peak Water Level (Feet)	Annual Peak Stream Flow (cfs)		Annual Peak Water Level (Feet)	Annual Peak Stream Flow (cfs)
1916	23.1	110,000	1916	20.7	23,000
2004	14.6	43,100	2004	19.2	12,900
Average	8.0	16,300	Average	8.0	3,500



On September 17, 2004, Hurricane Ivan led to flooding outside Biltmore Village

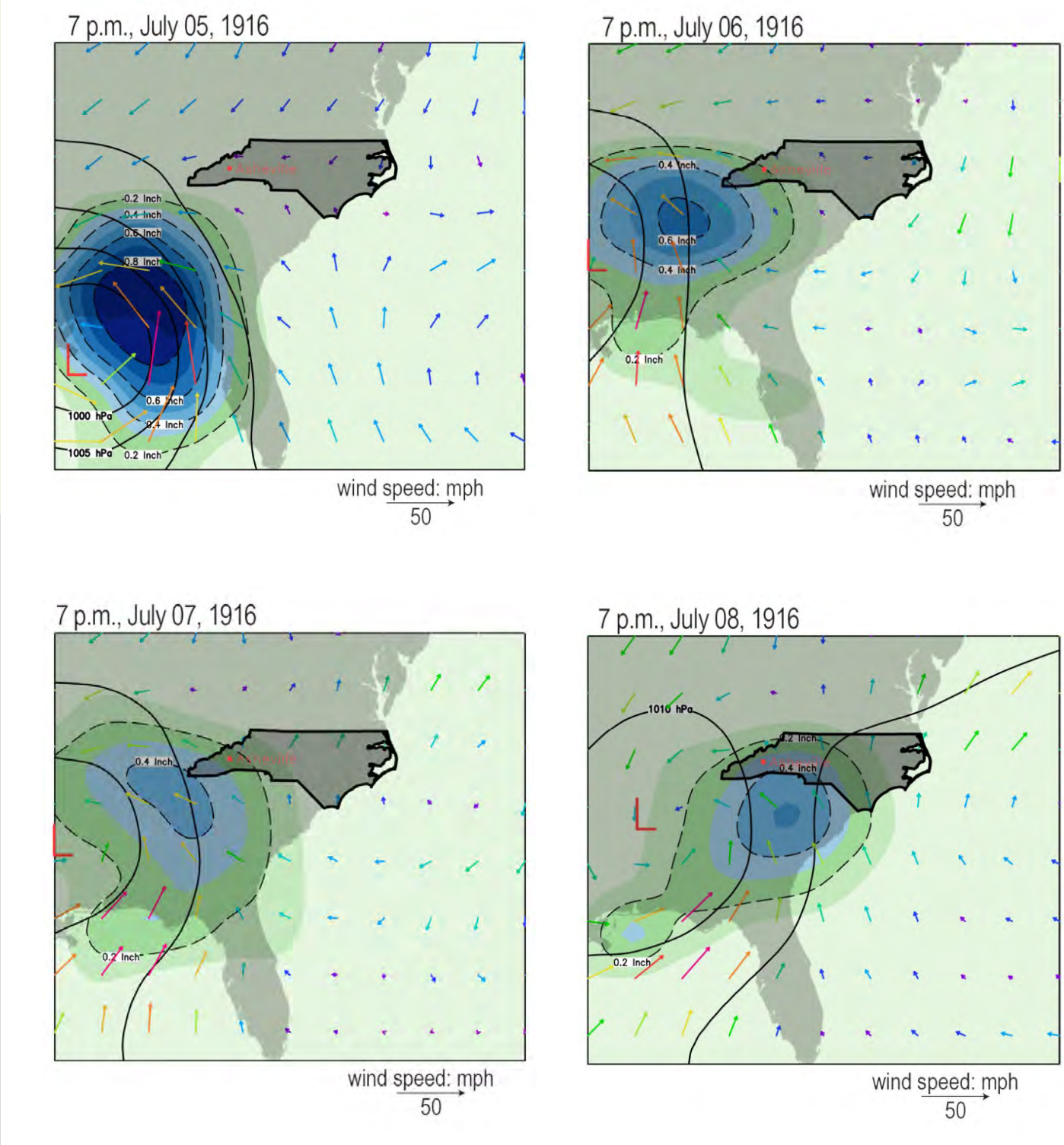
July 15–17 Rainfall Totals

- Brevard: 14.70 inches
- Morganton: 12.66 inches
- Hendersonville: 12.32 inches
- Asheville: 2.98 inches

July 16, 1916

- French Broad River at Asheville
- 8 a.m. 13.5 feet
- 9 a.m. 18.6 feet
- 10 a.m. Rain gauge washed away
- French Broad estimated crest: 23.1 feet
- Swannanoa River crest: 20.7 feet

22.22 inches of rainfall at Altapass remains the state record for highest 24-hour precipitation total



July 5–6

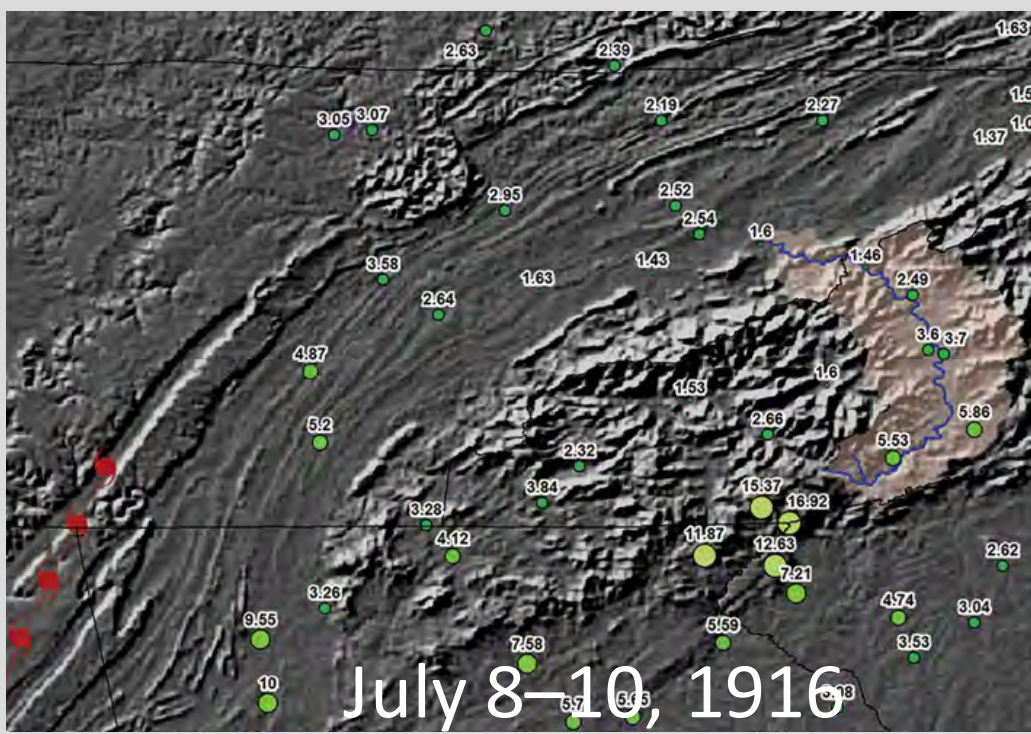
First hurricane made landfall between Biloxi and Mobile, Alabama, with winds of 118 mph

It moved to north-central Mississippi while weakening

July 7–8

Storm moved east into central Alabama

Rain began falling in western North Carolina

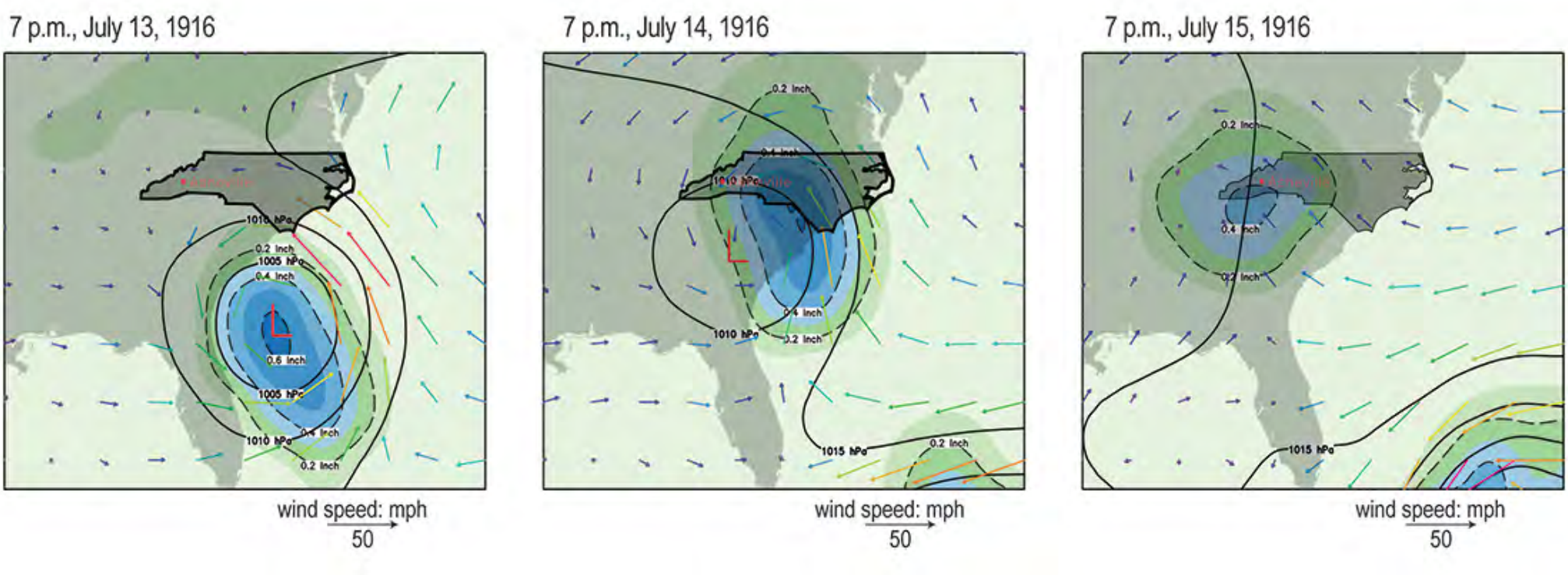


July 9

French Broad River at Asheville reached 4.8 feet, 0.8 feet above flood stage

Rain continued

Storm weakened and dissipated near Chattanooga, Tennessee



July 11

Second storm formed about 300 miles east of the Bahamas

French Broad River at Asheville reached 8.8 feet

July 12–13

Storm strengthened to a Category 3 with 113-mph winds

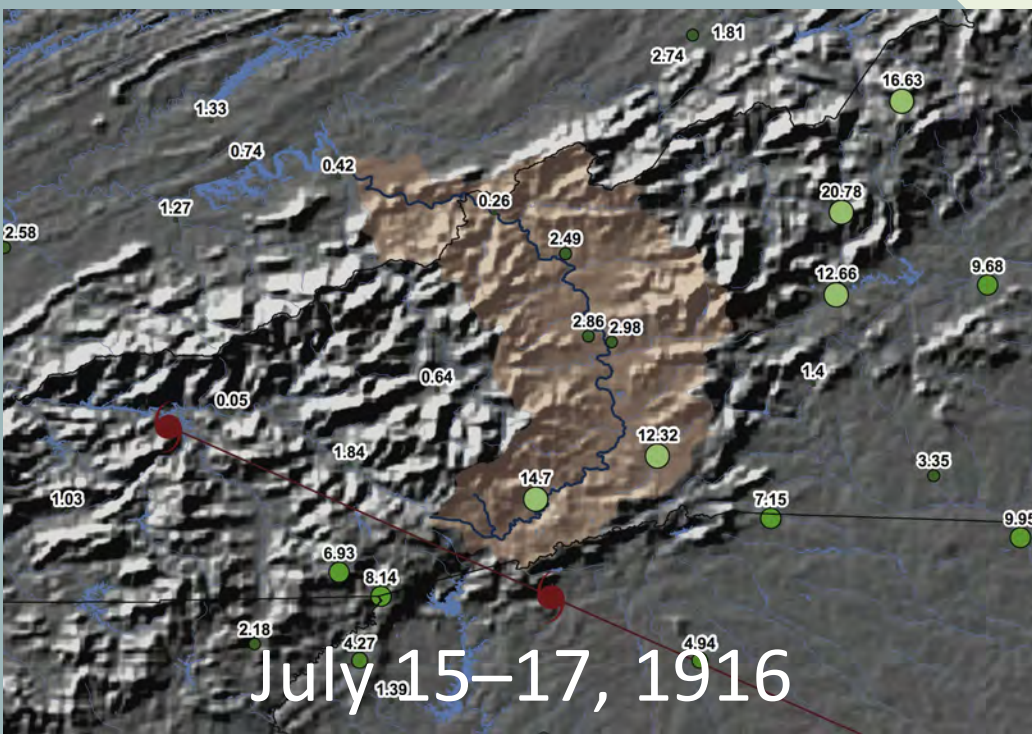
It moved to just off the Atlantic coast at Charleston, South Carolina

July 14

It weakened to 108 mph before making landfall near Charleston

July 15

It became a weak extratropical low in the Smoky Mountains west of Asheville



JULY	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	First Storm						Second Storm					

